



**U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)  
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)**

***Iran – Earthquake***

Fact Sheet #1, Fiscal Year (FY) 2004

December 28, 2003

**BACKGROUND**

- On December 26, 2003 at 05:27 am local time, an earthquake struck Kerman Province in southeastern Iran. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, the earthquake measured 6.6 on the Richter scale and had a depth of 10 km. The epicenter was near the city of Bam, 180 km southeast of the provincial capital of Kerman and 975 km southeast of Tehran. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) reports that an estimated 100,000 to 120,000 people live in Bam and the surrounding villages, all of whom have been affected by the earthquake.

**CURRENT SITUATION**

- International media reports estimate that the earthquake has resulted in the deaths of at least 10,000 to 25,000 people.
- Government of Iran (GOI) officials estimate that 25,000 to 40,000 people have been injured. UN OCHA reports that the earthquake destroyed both hospitals in Bam. Approximately 5,000 of the injured have been airlifted to other cities for medical treatment.
- GOI officials report that 90 percent of the buildings are 60 to 100 percent damaged or destroyed and the damage to the remainder of the buildings is estimated between 40 and 60 percent. Some residents are sleeping outdoors in freezing temperatures.
- According to UN OCHA, the earthquake has disrupted water, electricity, gas, and telephone services in the area. The mobile phone system is operational but lines are overloaded.

**U.S. GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE**

- On December 27, USAID deployed a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) composed of seven members. The members include a Team Leader, Deputy Team Leader, Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Operations Coordinator, Planning Coordinator, Communications Officer, Information Officer, and Security Officer. The USAID/DART will manage the December 27 deployment of the Fairfax County Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Task Force and the International Medical/Surgical Response Team (IMSuRT) and Management Support Team (MST) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
- The Fairfax County USAR Task Force consists of 73 members, four search dogs, and approximately 54 metric tons (MT) of tools, equipment, and vehicles.
- The FEMA IMSuRT team consists of a six-member management support team, 60 medical professionals, and approximately 19 MT of equipment.
- On December 28, USAID/ OFDA airlifted approximately 30 MT of relief commodities to Bam in support of emergency housing needs. The commodities included 300 rolls of plastic sheeting and 7,500 blankets.
- The U.S. Department of Defense airlifted food and other assorted relief commodities on December 28.

**OTHER DONOR AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION ASSISTANCE**

- UN OCHA is coordinating 24 USAR teams from 20 countries: Austria, Belgium, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Norway, Poland, Russian Federation, South Africa, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, and the United States.
- According to international media reports, the following donors had pledged assistance, including monetary and non-food items, as of December 27: Afghanistan, Australia, China, European Union, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Kenya, Norway, Russia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, and Turkey.
- UN OCHA has dispatched a United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team to the area to assist in the coordination of relief efforts.
- The U.N. Disaster Management Team (UNDMT) in Tehran sent two teams to the area on December 26 to collect, verify, and compile information on the impact of the earthquake. The UNDMT consists of the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the U.N. World Food Program (WFP), the U.N. World Health Organization (WHO), and the U.N. Development Program (UNDP).

- The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has dispatched an assessment and coordination team to the disaster site and released a preliminary appeal for \$12.3 million in cash, kind or services to assist 200,000 beneficiaries for six months.

#### **PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION**

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. Information on organizations responding to the humanitarian situation in Iran may be available at [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int).
- USAID encourages cash donations because they: allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, warehouse space, etc); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; ensure culturally, dietary, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information on making donations and volunteering can be found at:
  - The Center for International Disaster Information: [www.cidi.org](http://www.cidi.org)
- Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int).

*USAID/OFDA bulletins appear on the USAID web site at [http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/humanitarian\\_assistance/disaster\\_assistance/](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/).*